



The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme Sunday 3 October - Trinity 18



Richard has put together our worship for today

Preparation

We come before the throne of God
With countless crowds
From every nation and race, tribe, and language

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honour, power and might
Be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

Call to Worship

Be with us, Spirit of God.
Nothing can separate us from your love.
Breathe on us, breath of God.
Fill us with your saving power.
Speak in us, wisdom of God.
Bring us strength, healing, and peace

Opening Prayers

Silence is kept
The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us.

Prayers of Penitence

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,
Which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.
We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

**Father,
We have sinned against heaven and against you.
We are not worthy to be called your children.
We turn to you again.
Have mercy on us,
Bring us back to yourself
As those who once were dead
But now have life through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Absolution

God our Father forgives us our sins
And brings us to the fellowship of his table
With his saints for ever. **Amen.**

The Collect

God, Our Judge and Saviour,
Teach us to be open to your truth
And to trust in your love,
That we may live each day
With confidence in the salvation which is given
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Word of God

First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24

Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.' So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.' Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word

Second Reading (Epistle): Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as

much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. But someone has testified somewhere,

‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?

You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honour,
subjecting all things under their feet.’

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word

Reflection from Anna

Very occasionally, I look down at my hands and think how amazing they are – not because I can do anything particularly clever with them, but because hands are a wonderful miracle of creation. Their design and functionality, their flexibility and ability to do a million different tasks, the way our fingers bend and stretch – if we consider all of the work our hands do in a day, it really is a source of such wonder and amazement.

We human beings are an amazing design. Watching sportspeople can also be a great reminder of that too – I love watching swimmers who train so very hard to explore the limits of what the human body can do – it is amazing watching powerful, strong, and beautiful strokes plough through the water – although I can swim, my elegant and rather slow breaststroke is a poor comparison. Dancing is another discipline where amazing athletes push their bodies to

become the most beautiful, they can be and express all human emotion without words. Sometimes we only remember how amazing our bodies can be when parts of our bodies stop working or we hurt ourselves or can't do things. We take our bodies for granted a lot of the time.

And there is the paradox that we find in today's epistle reading. The writer is reminding us of a God who loved the world so much that he gave his son as one of us to change the world. But Jesus had to be fully human. And part of that humanness is a vulnerability too. He had a body that was just like yours and mine, but one which could be broken by violence, cruel, sharp nails, and abuses of power. He lived a real human life in a fragile and beautiful body yet also was part of the divine love of the Trinity and was also God. He was power and suffering; authority and servanthood; grace and obedience and all of this in a body like yours and mine. Jesus was fully human and fully God.

That true humanity of Jesus offers us challenges. The first is to ensure the flourishing of all of humanity. We are made in the likeness of God – people of goodness and love with amazing skills and talents and all of us are beautiful. Yet poverty, hatred, bitterness, and hard lives can chip away at the beauty of people, and it is our challenge to address structures and inequalities in society that make some people's lives harder than others. Imagine the beauty of a world where all had access to food, water, healthcare, and education – the true flourishing of all of humanity! Also, recognizing our common humanity can foster better relationships with others - it is hard to hate when you truly see that your neighbour is essentially the same as you. But we can also rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus came to walk alongside us in human form and so he understands when we are suffering. When life is hard, he has felt that too. Even he cried out on the cross at the moment of his deepest pain - he truly shared our vulnerabilities as humans: he lived alongside us, as one of us, and so is with us in all of the difficulties of life.

Just take a moment to look at your hands – to feel their strength and be awed by their perfect design and be reminded of God's amazing creativity. Let them remind us that we need to work for peace and justice and that they can and should reach out to others in need. But we can also hold them in prayer and praise too, reminding us that Jesus knows what it is like to suffer and so understands all of our sorrows and pain and can help us as we share it all with Him.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the father.**

through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

he suffered death and was buried.

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Brenda Wilkinson

Dear Lord and Father

We come before you in our Benefice Churches and our homes today, as your beloved son Jesus Christ our saviour taught us, wherever two or more are gathered in your name there you will be. We give thanks for your promise, and we lay the burdens of our troubled and broken world at the foot of The Cross, the symbol of our Lord's suffering but also the enduring symbol of the height, breadth, and depth of his love for us. That he would willingly suffer and die for our sakes.

Lord Jesus you carried and bore that cross for us in the certain knowledge of your imminent, unbearable suffering but also in the sure and certain knowledge of hope through your resurrection. You alone know Lord how agonising that suffering was to bear. We give you heartfelt thanks Lord for your sacrifice and the Hope you instil in us.

We give thanks for the beauty of our world and for all living creatures. We pray that you will fill our hearts and minds with compassion and loving kindness for all of humanity. We, in our benefice are fortunate, that for the majority of us, we live in a peaceful and secure community within a beautiful setting, but we ask you Lord that you remind us constantly that there are many of our brothers and sisters, who, often unseen, live close by whom through no fault of their own, do know poverty and deprivation. Open our hearts Lord and help us to see them and share generously with those less fortunate than ourselves the riches we enjoy so that we can demonstrate in our daily lives the example you set us. Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Lord, as we see through our media and social outlets the plight of refugees, the homeless, displaced, and dispossessed, we ask that you remind us that, as we heard in our first reading this morning, we all stem from Adam's rib and are connected each to the other.

Fill the hearts and minds of the leaders of the world with wisdom and compassion and lift the scales of ignorance, dogma, and false ideology from their eyes. Give them insight and empathy so that they may remember their responsibility to every citizen of their lands including our own elected politicians, Government, and Opposition. Help them in their decision making to remember your teachings.

Lord fill their hearts with compassion and kindness so that the riches of our nation can be more fairly and justly shared with all.

Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Lord, we pray for the leaders of our own clergy and the leaders of our Church who just this week have spoken out in the name of Christ to counter injustice in our society.

We pray for our Civic leaders and our Sovereign Elizabeth who has faithfully served us through almost seven decades and now in her widowhood, when most of us have long retired continues in her vow of duty made as a young girl of 21. Ease her burdens Lord and give her the chance for more daily rest.

Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Lord, we give thanks for those who work to ease the suffering of the sick. For all those who care for us and their fellow citizens, both professionally and as informal carers, in this ongoing second year of pandemic. Especially we give thanks for those who worked to find successful vaccines and continue to do so. We thank you Lord for their skills and scientific knowledge. We remember in our prayers all those who have died in recent times and hope and know in our faith they will now be with you in the peace of your eternal Kingdom. For all those who have suffered the loss of a loved one we ask you to comfort them in their grief, and we pray they will find solace in their memories.

We think of all our brothers and sisters for whom treatments have, of necessity, been delayed in recent times, that they will soon be relieved of their pain and suffering. We ask you Lord to remember all who are in distress because of physical or mental ill health. Our thoughts naturally turn to those we know and love who are suffering illness or are moving toward the end of their lives. Even though we may or may not know them all Lord, you know each and every one of them. Hold them in your loving arms Lord and give them ease of pain, peace of mind and soothe their and our troubled hearts.

Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, we thank you for those who work to ease the suffering of the homeless and the hungry and as we approach the winter months We bring before you with love, thanks, and praise for all those agencies who work toward this goal. But we especially pray that you continue to remind us Lord, this work starts with each and every one of us so that we can live out your teachings and values of love, kindness, and compassion. Forgive us Lord our sins of omission when we forget.

Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Lord, at this moment in time we are bombarded with messages of a lack of the things we seem always to have taken for granted. Food on supermarket shelves, petrol in the pumps, the harvest in the fields left to rot away, previously picked on our behalf by unseen, unknown workers who now seem to be no longer there. Lord help us to work toward changing our attitude so that we never again take the lifestyle we have enjoyed for granted. And help us to work toward preserving our planet so that all can be fed, their basic needs for shelter, warmth, food, and improved health be met.

Lord in your Mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Lord and Father of All as we approach the beauty of the Autumn season, we give thanks for the forth coming harvests produced through the hard work of farmers, though fed and watered by your hand in the sun and the rain. We look around Lord and marvel at the wonders you lay before us. Every morning the Sun rises, the trees take on a mantle of glorious colour, the skies, whether blue or grey fill our hearts with wonder. Lord and Father, we give thanks for you and for each and every day we are able to praise you and your creation. Accept these prayers for the sake of our saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Conclusion

Closing Prayers

Jesus, lord of time, **hold us in your eternity.**

Jesus, image of God, **travel with us the life of faith.**

Jesus, friend of sinners, **heal the brokenness of our world.**

Jesus, lord of tomorrow, **draw us into your future. Amen.**

Sending out

May God give to you and to all those you love his comfort and his peace, his light, and his joy, in this world and the next, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen!